This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently amended) A method for controlling access to a product, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

    (a)   receiving a request for a product from a requestor;

    (b)   generating, substantially at the time the request is received, a license string that controls access to the product, the license string being generated by encoding at least one of: (i) information associated with the product; and (ii) information associated with the request; and

    (c)   transmitting the license string to the requestor.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~step (a)~~receiving the request comprises receiving the request via a distributed communications network.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~step (a)~~receiving the request comprises receiving payment information from the requestor.

4. (Currently amended) The method of claim 3 further comprising ~~the step of~~verifying the received payment information.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~step (b)~~generating the license string comprises using a cryptographic process to generate the license string that controls access to the product.

6. (Previously amended) The method of claim 5 wherein the cryptographic process generates the license string by encoding a character text string.

7.   (Previously amended) The method of claim 5 wherein the cryptographic process generates the license string, the license string being encoded as an upper case alphanumeric string excluding capital O, capital I, and numbers 0 and 1.

8.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 5 wherein the cryptographic process generates the license string by encoding at least one of:

    a date of creation of the ~~license string~~product;

    a ~~number~~version of ~~users enabled by~~ the ~~license string~~product; and

    a ~~type~~date of ~~license string created~~the request.

9.   (Previously amended) The method of claim 5 wherein the license string includes validation information.

10.   (Previously amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the license string controls access to a single facility.

11.   (Previously amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the license string controls access to a plurality of facilities.

12.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein ~~step (e)~~transmitting the license string to the requestor comprises transmitting the license string to the requestor via a distributed communications network.

13.   (Previously amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the product functions for only a predetermined period of time if the license string is not entered into the product.

14.   (Previously amended) The method of claim 13 wherein the license string enables the product to function beyond the predetermined period of time.

15. (Currently amended) A system for controlling access to a product, the system comprising:

an input unit receiving a request for a product from a requestor;

a license string generator in electrical communication with the input unit, the license string generator producing, substantially at the time the request is received, a license string that controls access to the product, the license string being produced by encoding at least one of: (i) information associated with the product; and (ii) information associated with the request; and

an output unit coupled to the license string generator, the output unit transmitting the license string to the requestor.

16. (Currently amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the input unit is in electrical communication with a network, and the input unit receives the request for the product via the network.

17. (Previously amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the license string generator uses a cryptographic engine to produce the license string.

18. (Previously amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the license string controls access to a single facility.

19. (Previously amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the license string controls access to a plurality of facilities.

20. (Currently amended) The system of claim 15 wherein the output unit is in electrical communication with a network, and the output unit transmits the product and the license string to the requestor via the network.

21. (Original) An article of manufacture having computer-readable program means embodied thereon, the computer-readable program means comprising the system of claim 15.

22.   (Currently amended) An article of manufacture having computer-readable program means for electronically distributing a product, the computer-readable program means comprising:

computer-readable program means for receiving a request for a product from a requestor;

computer-readable program means for generating, substantially at the time the request is received, a license string that enables the product when supplied by the requestor, the license string being generated by encoding at least one of: (i) information associated with the product; and (ii) information associated with the request;

computer-readable program means for associating the license string with the product; and

computer-readable program means for transmitting the product and the associated license string to the requestor.

23.   (Original) The article of manufacture of claim 22 further comprising computer-readable program means for receiving payment information from the requestor.

24.   (Currently amended) A method of controlling access to a product, the method comprising the steps of:

receiving a request to access a product from a requestor, the product providing access to information pertaining to at least one project;

forming a license string that enables access to the information pertaining to the at least one project, the license string including license information and validation information; and

transmitting the license string to the requestor.

25.   (Previously added) The method of claim 24 wherein the request is received via a distributed communications network.

26.   (Previously added) The method of claim 24 wherein the request includes payment information associated with the requestor.

27.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 26 further comprising ~~the step of~~ verifying the payment information.

28.   (Previously added) The method of claim 24 wherein a cryptographic process forms the license string.

29.   (Previously added) The method of claim 28 wherein the cryptographic process forms the license string by encoding a character text string.

30.   (Previously added) The method of claim 28 wherein the cryptographic process encodes the license string as an upper case alphanumeric string excluding capital O, capital I, and numbers 0 and 1.

31.   (Previously added) The method of claim 28 wherein the cryptographic process forms the license string by encoding:

a date of creation of the license string;

a number of users enabled by the license string; and

a type of license string created.

32.   (Currently amended) The method of claim 28 wherein the ~~license string includes~~ validation information is formed based on the license information.

33.   (Previously added) The method of claim 24 wherein the license string is formed substantially at the time the request is received.

34.   (Previously added) The method of claim 24 wherein the license string enables access to information pertaining to a plurality of projects.

35.   (Previously added) The method of claim 24 wherein the license string is transmitted to the requestor via a distributed communications network.

36.   (Previously added) The method of claim 24 wherein the product functions for only a predetermined period of time if the license string is not entered into the product.

37.   (Previously added) The method of claim 36 wherein the license string enables the product to function beyond the predetermined period of time.

38.   (Previously added) The method of claim 24 wherein the information pertaining to the at least one project corresponds to a virtual workroom.

39.   (Previously added) The method of claim 38 wherein the virtual workroom provides access to files, data, and discussion information associated with the at least one project.

40.   (Previously added) The method of claim 38 wherein the virtual workroom corresponds to a collection of HTML pages.

41.   (Currently amended) A system for controlling access to a product, the system comprising:

        an input unit receiving a request to access a product from a requestor, the product providing access to information pertaining to at least one project;

        a license string generator in electrical communication with the input unit, the license string generator forming a license string that enables access to the information pertaining to the at least one project, the license string including license information and validation information; and

        an output unit coupled to the license string generator, the output unit transmitting the license string to the requestor.

42.   (Currently amended) The system of claim 41 wherein the input unit is in electrical communication with a network, and the input unit receives the request via the network.

43.   (Previously added) The system of claim 41 wherein the license string generator uses a cryptographic engine to produce the license string.

44.   (Previously added) The system of claim 41 wherein the license string is formed substantially at the time the request is received.

45.   (Previously added) The system of claim 41 wherein the license string enables access to information pertaining to a plurality of projects.

46.   (Currently amended) The system of claim 41 wherein the output unit is in electrical communication with a network, and the output unit transmits the product and the license string to the requestor via the network.

47.   (Previously added) The system of claim 41 wherein the information pertaining to the at least one project corresponds to a virtual workroom.

48.   (Previously added) The system of claim 47 wherein the virtual workroom provides access to files, data, and discussion information associated with the at least one project.

49.   (Previously added) The system of claim 47 wherein the virtual workroom corresponds to a collection of HTML pages.

50.   (Previously added) An article of manufacture having computer-readable program means embodied thereon, the computer-readable program means comprising the system of claim 41.